

Interview with Richard A. Buckley

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Program
Foreign Service Spouse Series

RICHARD A. BUCKLEY

Interviewed by: Jewell Fenzi

Initial interview date: January 19, 1988

Q: One of the things I am, of course, interested in is the questionnaire you sent out to many spouses. Could we talk about that later I do have that in mind but if I may begin by just asking how do you feel as a male dependent spouse?

BUCKLEY: Well, by nature I am a very positive and optimistic person and I have probably enjoyed my time affiliated with the Foreign Service as much as, if not more than, my wife, who is the officer. Probably for a number of reasons. I had an opportunity to transfer my knowledge and experience in the United States to places overseas, particularly in Africa and in India.

Where my wife is a Foreign Service brat....she grew up in the Foreign Service her first 20 years, so she has gone through that process and it is now a matter of her returning in a different capacity, and struggling through those frustrations that she was already aware of from her dinner table conversations with her family. So it's been a new and educational experience for me, one in which I desire to continue.

Q: That's interesting, but not new for her of course. She was well aware of...

BUCKLEY: It's as frustrating for her...probably more so now because she has stepped into the shoes of her father, who was in the administration cone and she is in it, and I feel from

Library of Congress

my conversations with her that she's seen very little change in how the Foreign Service operates. And she has a great deal to contribute because of the breadth of knowledge and skills she has which can really help in a number of areas where the Foreign Service is currently experiencing difficulties.

Q: I think you have answered my next question, which is, not everyone can be a male dependent spouse, can they? And I don't mean that facetiously. I mean it takes a certain personality, a certain attitude which you seem to have.

BUCKLEY: Right, I tend to agree with that. But the survey that we are doing of the male spouses will probably give us a better view of our own perceptions, a check on our own perceptions, on what type of person is joining their wives in the Foreign Service. But I think a lot has to do with where the male spouse is in his own life, say lifestyle, his own expectations of what's going to happen to him in the next few years.

Q: You are anticipating my questions, because my next one was... You really had a very distinguished career of your own, really, didn't you? You were in law, and so you filled those expectations and came to the male dependent spouse role at a later time than some of the others are doing, and I would think that makes quite a difference, and obviously you do too. You are not competing with your spouse for career recognition and career success.

BUCKLEY: Right. There are a number of others I have seen like myself. Some of them are former military officers who now have retired and put that career behind them, and what they are looking for is a different type of personal fulfillment. I chose primarily to be very supportive of my wife, and that is part of fulfilling my own nature. That's part of what I have done most of my life, in the service area of domestic life in the U.S. And now I've just switched it, focusing on an individual who I think can have a very significant impact in her own chosen sphere. More so than I had in mind, to be truthful.

Library of Congress

Q: In other words you are the support system for your wife and you are willing to play that role.

BUCKLEY: Oh, definitely.

Q: May I ask, where do your five children fit into this new life, in this splendid picture that you are painting for me here? They are too old to go with you.

BUCKLEY: Yes, only my number four, which is my second daughter, joined us in India for a few months, just as we were completing the tour. She was in between her junior and senior year in college, and that was a very rewarding experience for all of us. We got to know each other better, and share a mutual experience within India. I think they are learning through our experiences that there is more than Texas, United States, and particularly Houston, Texas, in our wonderful world.

And I think they are learning at first hand by visiting us overseas or here. But more so by having an exchange with me when they do visit, because they readily see that I am not like other fathers, I don't have a full time job, I don't have a particular career that I am pursuing, and most of the time when they interact with me I'm cooking a meal. So they have various questions they would like to explore with me and I think it is going to be helpful for all of us as time passes.

Q: I find that interesting. You really have had a varied background, and it didn't bother you to go away from law into...well, you have been principal of the American School, and you've been a CLO, and training consultant, all of these...I'm going to mention these just for the tape. Training consultant to USAID in Dakar; Accountant Consultant, Dakar Embassy; CLO Coordinator, Dakar; Management consultant training, New Delhi, Consular Assistant, Bombay, and Principal of the Bombay International School. Marvelous. You have always found a job when you've gone to post.

Library of Congress

BUCKLEY: Right, and I prepared for the one going to Dakar, and it was just a matter of meeting the USAID Director, which I did a couple of weeks after arrival through our orientation process, to mention the magic word for him. I had seen the desk officer - USAID for Dakar - prior to going to Dakar, and he had given me a cable indicating that they were looking for someone to assist in their training area, so I was ready. But India, I did not prepare at all, because it was sort of a substitute post after the career development officer asked us to resubmit the bid list, so I just went there and became part of the overall operations and just waited until...

Q: Do you think it's easier for you as a male dependent spouse to be employed abroad, because of your professional background and your training, than it is for a regular spouse. Or does the mission look for a job for you because it makes them nervous to have an unemployed American male around? Or is it a little bit of both?

BUCKLEY: I think it's a little bit of both.

Q: But the latter does exist?

BUCKLEY: I have found that in my case, especially in Dakar, I don't think it happens that much in a small post like Bombay, but it will happen in mid-size embassies and larger, like Dakar, because you are going to be interacting with them a great deal at parties and at official receptions, so I found they want to be able to converse with you, and it's a lot easier conversing with a male spouse if he is employed within the official community somehow or even within the country, but more so within the official community. Then they can talk shop.

But if you are not, then they have to sort of say, "Well, what did you do before?", and that opens up an entire arena of subjects which they may or may not be very receptive to go into. So yes, I agree with both, and it is of course a very ticklish area with the people I

Library of Congress

am interacting with, with M/FLO and the senior Foreign Service wives about this sort of unacknowledged favoritism or recognition given to male spouses.

But it's there, because males dominate the Foreign Service. It's something that I think we are going to meet head on as a result of the survey we are conducting with male spouses. Because we are asking them specific questions in that area, and we will be able then to really assess the answers vis-a-vis them being males or dependent spouses.

Q: The one other male dependent spouse I talked to ... I was so struck by his attitude. It wasn't going to a post and wondering if he would find a job. Going to a post, his first priority was to get his household set up and then to get his job. It was just a question of when. Now, he did have a portable skill, a very portable skill, anyone in drama or teaching I think can pick up some threads.

BUCKLEY: But I think that the male spouses have those expectations, I think they are coming to see that those expectations are not being fulfilled as they had thought. The responses to the test survey I ran in October of last year (1987) reflected that. I asked them those questions ... did they find work, was it satisfying, and half of them didn't.

Q: Didn't find work?

BUCKLEY: Didn't find work. Or if they did it was a part time job for a few months and then nothing.

Q: There again, you keep anticipating my questions. A lot of them who do find work must be underemployed.

BUCKLEY: The common thread that I find in reviewing the AAFSW study of 1983-84, their publication, "The Role of the Spouse in the Foreign Service," and male spouses, is going to be that they do not receive appropriate recognition for what they bring to their being part of the Foreign Service team, or being part of the Foreign Service community. What they

Library of Congress

bring, whether it is utilized or not, is a major question, and I think that is a key factor that has to be addressed in the future. It's not the reward, the financial reward, as much as the recognition for what that person is contributing to the stability of the Foreign Service family and to the ongoing spirit of the Foreign Service community.

Q: Studs Terkel found out fifteen years ago....what was the title of that book, Working?....that job satisfaction and recognition were much more important than the financial remuneration. I don't think it's entirely the responsibility of the mission to provide the solution to that. It is up to the host country to a certain extent. Do you agree?

BUCKLEY: Now you're jumping into very tenuous ground because I am very concerned and upset about the fortress mentality that we're adopting in the Foreign Service with this complete over emphasis on security. I mean, who are they trying to make secure? It isn't the spouse and the families. We know we have to go out into the community. We have to. We've got to do certain things. We've got to do certain shopping chores ourselves.

And we've just got to, for our own mentality, we have to interact with others, whether they are within the diplomatic community or within the local community. So in response to your question, I think we first have to reflect on why we are there. And I don't think we're there to build a fortress to make sure - well, as you can see the spy scandal in Russia was finally admitted this past week in the [Washington] Post article to have been completely overblown and it just continues then to give weight to the Security minded

Q: But knowing the situation, didn't you ... I felt it was overblown at the time, I felt it had to be.

BUCKLEY: Definitely. Well, it was almost a certainty that something was going to happen with the Marines. Everyone knows how Marines operate everywhere. Wherein if no one is really trying to alleviate the conditions particularly in a place like Moscow, then definitely, it's part of that American way that it is a situation ready to happen.

Library of Congress

Q: You said you were familiar with the 1972 Directive. Do you feel that has been a double edged sword for the Department? Well, I should say for women more than for the Department. I guess my complaint is that we have taken a role away from the spouse, and yet we are [employing highly educated, skilled spouses] as telephone operators and filing visas. It's ridiculous. What we need to do is give [new] stature to their role as a wife. Do you agree with that?

BUCKLEY: Oh definitely. In fact I am working with a group of Foreign Service women and the male spouse in the group to try to address that issue because there was an article recently by the CLO out of Cameroon, Yaounde, about the issue of what is happening to our Foreign Service community. It is breaking into splinter groups. Part we never see. Part of the community they stay within ... and a part we never see because they are working all the time.

But then we have that part that is supposed to carry on the traditional function of really representing who we are as Americans. It's a very critical problem, but again I think where the Department hasn't really explored the potential solution is in the whole area of examining what contributions to the community every spouse can make. The potential is there. Within our ongoing operations there are ways to even find adequate financial rewards for those who want to seek it in that way. And then you use a little imagination...

But let me cite one incident that I am totally familiar with which comes up and is concurred with by most spouses. And this is the situation where USAID is present and I think many times they never examine carefully the resources they have available at their post, and they go back to the U.S., tap into the consulting firm to bring an overseas contractor on site, frankly, my experience in both India and Senegal, there were many difficulties with those consultants.

Some of them didn't even speak the language, French, had to have a spouse employed part time to be an interpreter for that particular team. So I think that really focuses the

Library of Congress

situation. I think that there are many spouses who can assume those contractual roles, and talk about saving money you would definitely be saving money if you could cut out all of that overseas expense of bringing in your household effects, setting up another house overseas.

Q: I find that interesting because when I was CLO in Trinidad we responded to Marlene Eagleburger's compensation article in the Post ... 55% of the staff came to the meeting, and we drafted a cable and one of the foremost things that they thought the Department should do was look at the spouse for AID contracts before bringing in outsiders.

BUCKLEY: Right, and that is the same thing that happened in Senegal. They had women that were extremely qualified and finally through ... I mean, the women actually formed a group and had an audience with the Director and put it right — it was almost like a small union there — so finally they got some recognition and some contracts because they did it as a group.

Q: Did you take part in that as CLO? Or give them legal advice? You're being modest.

BUCKLEY: I gave them the benefit of what I knew of the internal operations.

Q: But that's important too, you see. I learned more about how an embassy operates the two years I was a CLO than I did the other 28 years I was a spouse. I really did.

BUCKLEY: And I think that is another important element that all spouses need to know, and I think that that is why I inserted in that questionnaire that I am sending to the male spouses, are they aware of the operations of the foreign affairs agencies, including the Department of State? Because if they are not aware, it would be very difficult to match their skills to what the potential needs are wherever they are located overseas. Oh definitely.

Library of Congress

Q: So training really could be very important — I didn't know what a transmittal slip was when I became CLO, I mean I had to learn everything from the ground up. And I see exactly where you are coming from, in that if someone knows the system they can work much more readily within it.

BUCKLEY: Right.

Q: It seems to me that another way to solve this solution would be to upgrade the position of the spouse. Give the Foreign Service spouse a job description and tell her what her job is. If there is remuneration there somewhere down the pike so much the better. But if the role of the spouse were upgraded in some way....you don't agree with me? I don't know how you would do it. I have always tossed this out, saying what we should do is employ the spouse as a spouse.

BUCKLEY: Well, yes, that is what our small group is doing. Our name is fluctuating, we used to be Four Plus One, but we lost one so we may be just the Unofficial Think Tank for Foreign Service Spouses. I think it is more important that we focus more on what is the role of the Foreign Service first, and Under Secretary Spiers has made the first step in the November issue of State Magazine he reported what he conveyed to the Foreign Service spouses at an AAFSW meeting, what he feels is the credo for Foreign Service people.

Now, that is the first step. It is critical that we underscore his first statement. He said in effect, "I think it is time that the Foreign Service has a better idea of its role and responsibilities.", and I think that is where we should focus.

Q: [Responsibilities] to itself, to its employees, to the host country where we are, or to all of the above?

BUCKLEY: To all of the above, and particularly in relationship to the American people. What is the role of the Foreign Service, the Department of State, vis-a-vis implementing our most important interests. One problem I had with Under Secretary Spiers credo is

Library of Congress

that he continually refers to national interests, that's too vague. That would be what I am looking at as sort of the mission. What is the mission, or the main purpose of the Foreign Service? He continued to support most of the statements by saying "the primary interest of the U.S.," "the national interest of our country."

I think they need to be identified. They have been previously. There was an article in the paper, I think it was December 1 (1987) by Senator Danworth and Senator Boren, from Oklahoma and Missouri respectively, wherein they indicate ... the title was "What's wrong with our Foreign Policy?", and it shows the President with half the foreign policy puzzle and Congress with half the foreign policy puzzle. Their message was very similar to Under Secretary Spiers, that we really don't have a good common sense of purpose with regard to our foreign policy in the United States. And he said they refer to the Vandenberg Resolution of 1949 and the same situation existed then. There was all kinds of confusion after World War II, but Vandenberg met with the Secretary of State and another Secretary and a few others, and they had a series of meetings and finally it led to the Vandenberg Resolution which was then adopted by the Senate in 1949, and their key - watch this, we have come 180o in my estimation from that - their key national interests were world peace with justice and a focus on the fundamental human rights, freedoms of people everywhere. And that was it. And that was it.

And it was interesting to see some by-products of that in which they were focusing on problems of conflict which would be resolved by regional groups made up of those countries within that region, and of course I am referring to the terrible conflicting situation they have in Central America, in that now the region is attempting to do that and we as a country may or may not be supportive, I don't know, we'll have to see it unfold.

Q: Supporting the Arias Peace Plan.

BUCKLEY: Exactly. So I think it is incumbent on the Department to take and become involved in the invitation that Senators Danworth and Boren issued to everyone who wants

Library of Congress

to put us back into a common sense of purpose. I think that once we do that, then that smaller question of the role of the Foreign Service spouse will have more validity and better focus. For example, as you continue, I've done some reviews recently because I saw an interesting thing in the Foreign Service Act of 1980.

It said right up front, almost in the preamble, it said that the Department of State and other foreign affairs agencies will make all efforts to make the selection of personnel more representative of the American people. I think that that connects to the traditional notion of American diplomacy that the diplomats overseas represent the American way. Well. I think that if you focus on concepts such as peace with justice and fundamental human rights, you begin then to examine what do they mean in relationship to the way Americans have lived them and expressed them during the past couple hundred years, and if you do, I think then you'll see the greater role to be played by Foreign Service spouses because, frankly, I think they are more representative of the American way than the official Foreign Service officer community.

Q: Certainly more varied.

BUCKLEY: More varied, and I think that at post overseas they have more opportunity, and by virtue of what they do, interact and show the American way to more people than the official officers do. Because the officers are very isolated, whatever their particular consular function is, they seem to stay in that track. Administrative officers, by the way, interact, more with the host community and Consular officers, than Political and Economic officers do.

Q: Yes, I found that very quickly [in Trinidad when I was CLO].

BUCKLEY: Because by the very nature [of their work], finding leases, dealing with contracts, keeping the embassy operating has to [put them in contact] with all types of various professions in the host country.

Library of Congress

Q: Of course, I was thinking in much more narrow terms, looking at just the spouse....thank you very much for this marvelous backdrop against which we are operating right now. I get back to the host country. There has to be acceptance in the local community for these women

End of Tape I, Side A; begin Side B

Q: I believe that is an aspect that we can't control entirely. We can do our bit, but that's another issue maybe. Perhaps you don't want to get into that.

BUCKLEY: Oh, no. I think that what I've seen particularly in Senegal was the women, and especially the senior officers' wives, AID directors' wives, PAO's wife, etc., were deeply involved in the host community. I think that what had to occur initially was the approach that they are taking. I mean they come in with a great deal of sensitivity and awareness of how they have to adapt to that particular [country]. But one, the AID director's wife, was the initial CLO in Dakar. She was a very effective one, one of the best CLO's I've ever seen, because of how she had really learned about the Senegalese culture, and how she had developed some close Senegalese friends and was into all the Senegalese arts, and the PAO's wife and the Admin officer's wife, were both into the international sphere of women's organizations, but these are womens' helping organizations which have a very defined scope and mission. No, I think the opportunities are there, I think again you need to really assess the situation before you become involved in it, so that you can determine exactly and very specifically what is going on, and how I best can become involved in it.

Q: So as CLO did you endeavor, then, more to get your people out into the community with various activities — arts and what have you?

BUCKLEY: Right. I didn't have much to do in coming up with anything new, all I had to do was maintain, what Barbara Shearer, the prior CLO had really initiated. It was a matter of continuing to just pass on the tremendous effort she had done. Oh yes. Well, I did that.

Library of Congress

Q: But I felt that was the most useful thing I could do, because there were times when we had 100% spouse employment at the Embassy. There was no one out in the community.

BUCKLEY: Exactly. Right.

Q: So you really — I can't imagine you as a CLO just following what someone else had said — I can't imagine that there wasn't a lot of personal input, that your successor then carried on too.

BUCKLEY: Now one thing I did do, and I think it's part of what we have been discussing earlier — the frustration of a number of Foreign Service spouses not being given recognition for what they do, others not involved in the community and so there is a sense of a community being splintered. One thing I tried to do when I was CLO was get everyone involved. And we ran a number of community events where I'd just make sure everyone had a role to play because it was their stakes.

And we had things like the ship visits and we had in Dakar the West Africa Invitation Softball Tournament, known affectionately as WAIST, and ten different posts, everyone was involved in it because we were the host families. We were the host and they shared our living facilities while they stayed there for about a week, and once you came in, you want to enjoy Dakar as much as you could, so that was my approach and I really used as much as I could the whole thing of sponsors, and I did as little as I could in that role of welcoming, I just made sure that they had the right information to join in orientation and things like that. But for meeting them at the airport, seeing their first three weeks through, it was always the sponsor and the other members of that sponsor's community. So, it was more making them realize that they had responsibilities to assist others who are going through, you know...

Q: Of course, what the CLO has done is institutionalize what we did as volunteers for years and years. I think that is probably necessary because the Service is so much larger.

Library of Congress

BUCKLEY: Right, well, it also does a little bit ... watch, I am going out on a limb now ... it also does a little bit of, and I'll give an example of this...it also does a little bit of diminishing the harsh results of the hierarchal structure we have with the old sometimes dragon, number one spouse in the community. Because it puts it in a role that has to follow certain norms, and if they have the CLO advisory committee then you get input from everyone.

To give you an example of that, while I was CLO in Dakar, in fact I was just beginning to be CLO, it was the 4th of July coming up, and as you know, the Ambassador usually has an official function for the other diplomatic community to participate in the birth of our nation and all that, so they are invited. Whereas the community has their own to celebrate the way we do. Well, the ambassador in Dakar asked the senior wives to help him put together his little hors d'oeuvres and things for that official [function], and I was sitting in on the meeting where they expressed their extreme opposition to this. And also indicated, had he just said, "Hey, I got this thing. Could you find some ideas how I could do it.", they may have given some of their time and energy. No way. In fact, they put so much of their energy into making the unofficial one so viable and important that the ambassador canceled his official one for the diplomatic community. So, it's just...

Q: Now, do I understand you correctly. Because the women did not support his request for hors d'oeuvres for his official thing that he canceled it?

BUCKLEY: It was the last push he needed. There also was a movement within the diplomatic community by some European countries that this is getting out of hand, that we have to you know have an official function every time, why don't we just do what we want to do, and it shouldn't be expected that we have to invite the entire diplomatic corps. Whereas because it may conflict with what we want to do to celebrate it in our own way among our own people, etc. What I am saying is that I think had he delegated that or given that task to the senior Foreign Service [wives], they would have meshed it and they would

Library of Congress

have had more of an international interaction with our own, and not over here, but over at the old residence where we had the entire day celebration.

Q: In other words, if he had gone to them and placed it in their hands and said, "How would you handle this?", of course. Except that when you say, "You make 57 open face sandwiches.", they are going to say no. But if you draw them in ... absolutely, [they should be willing to help].

BUCKLEY: And they could have accomplished both objectives simultaneously.

Q: So which of these many roles did you really enjoy the most? Principal of the school, consular assistant, CLO, accountant?

BUCKLEY: I think that they have probably been building on each other. The first one, being the accountant for the embassies in Dakar and Nouakchott and then being the training consultant to AID, enabled me to really learn the operations of the foreign affairs agencies overseas.

Q: So that was valuable, for everything that you have gone on to since.

BUCKLEY: Exactly.

Q: Getting back to the spouse aspects of the role, when you go to a post do you set up the household, do you get the meals? You have to, don't you?

BUCKLEY: Oh, yes. I do it in conjunction of course with the staff GSO, now I know how they operate. I must say that I have found the experience of packing out much more pleasurable and easier overseas than doing it here by one of those three or four designated movers. Mainly because of the crunch, we have more people leaving [Washington] in the summer months, whereas overseas it's more staggered.

Q: Here you actually have to get in line quite a bit ahead of time.

Library of Congress

BUCKLEY: And it can be a nightmare. But, yes, I do, that's one of my tasks. In fact, sometimes I go overboard, you know, like having everything all together and labeled, for us it works very well because then we have a record of how we brought it together, and we can match it subsequently with the official inventory. Oh, yes, I am a spouse in most every sense of the word. I love to cook, and I even cook for some representational meals. But I primarily cook for the American community. What we have done from the beginning is in Senegal we tried to cover all the secretaries and singles, ten or twelve, at our holidays like at Thanksgiving and Christmas. And then in Bombay it was more like having half of the American community at one holiday, and the other half of the American community at another holiday at our house. Just the way we like to approach things. Small is in, by the way, the smaller the dinner party the better I think most people feel when they leave, so we sort of limit ours to eight or ten.

Q: Eight to ten is perfect.

BUCKLEY: So everyone is able to meet each other and sort of feel a little bit more knowledgeable where the person is coming from when they leave.

Q: Well, very good. It's delightful for me to see you enjoying your role so much and I hope the others [male dependent spouses]

BUCKLEY: Oh, I think so. I think I told you there are nearly 500 male spouses just in State alone. I am anticipating probably around 800 when we finally get all the lists in from the other four foreign affairs agencies. But I think that you are going to find, just like in the female spouses, the whole spectrum from age twenty-two to age 65 to 70, and all there for various reasons, and they are all at different phases of their life, and I think what is going to be important from at least my standpoint of being the coordinator of this in recapping and writing an article is to also focus on the commonality.

Library of Congress

I've already indicated to M/FLO that I want to be able to see how this reinforces the '84 Report on the Role of the Spouse in the Foreign Service, and to see how it is also reinforcing and then perhaps extending it because of this new element as well as the passage of about four years. So that is one of my objectives.

Q: I will tell Penne Laingen that you are using that report because she is one of the authors of that, and she has felt that really the wealth of information in there hasn't been mined by the Department.

BUCKLEY: I'll give her one feedback that I have received in some workshops I have done for the Overseas Briefing Center, particularly the regulations in allowance and finance workshop where I bring it in and I show them. Many of the women, particularly the younger women, spouses, think they tie it all to representation. They look at roles, the role of the Foreign Service spouse, as doing the traditional representation. They don't realize that it is the whole history of the Foreign Service spouses as well as an expression of their overwhelming current needs. They never got that feeling when they had seen it. And another factor I think is that CLOs haven't used it as much as they could. I mean it's there, and we basically just put it on a shelf with other things. But I think we can relate it to ongoing situations and incidents at post.

Q: I thought it was one of the most worthwhile documents that I saw during my two years as a CLO, really.

BUCKLEY: Definitely.

Q: But she has had the feeling that it just hasn't been used.

BUCKLEY: Well, perhaps one of things that I can do then as I just said, by my referencing to it, and then expanding on the conclusions and observations perhaps I can revitalize it, or at least have it brought out more into utilization than it has in the past.

Library of Congress

Q: I mentioned it in the Peltier article as a little footnote in the hopes that someone might say, "What is this document?" that is being referred to.

BUCKLEY: Right, well when I do it in my workshop and show it, then there is a run on OBC. The next break they are out to get the book.

Q: Fine, I'll tell Penne she can bring in some more copies.

BUCKLEY: Oh, definitely;

Q: Two observations I made during my two years as CLO, there were three really. One is I don't know in what separate terms we like to think of foreign born spouses. I have always thought it would be the most difficult thing in the world for me to go out and try to be a spouse representing another country. Do we address that in any of our training. There again you are dealing with such a wide variety of women.

BUCKLEY: Well, I think we are going to have to, and I address it in a separate part of our orientation, that two week study that we have, the American studies course, as well as a separate [course] to focus to their needs because they are going to need some more in depth examination of who are we as Americans, to be able to at least have a basic conversation with anyone overseas. No, I agree with you, a foreign [born] spouse...and it's going to show up. In the male spouses there are a number of male spouses who are foreign born.

Q: I knew one.

BUCKLEY: I think it is going to be surprising, the numbers. You have to realize that there is now an increasing number of young women officers going overseas and their search for an ideal man is met quickly in a foreign country. Yes, it's going to increase. And I think I'll have to address that then as part of my report, and it's an ongoing problem, foreign born spouses.

Library of Congress

Q: The one male dependent spouse I knew I studied Portuguese with. My heart went out to him because he was translating from his original language into English and then to Portuguese. Well, he had a terrible time. I am making a long story very short. Two years later he came to Recife with his spouse. His spouse, by the way, was the stellar whiz in our Portuguese class. She was so competitive, so competent, well, my tongue was hanging out because I am competitive, too, and was trying to keep up with her.

To make the long story very short. Two years later she, being the USIS secretary, had lost her Portuguese because she was dealing in English all the time at the post. He, on the other hand, was an architect, and he had gotten an FBO job. Well, he had gone around the country upgrading consulate meeting rooms and things like that. He had gotten out into the community. He, as you said with your situation, he was having the better time, his Portuguese had gotten better and there was a total about face from when I first encountered them. And he was one foreign born spouse who had done very well in that post. Now, what happened to him the next time round, I really don't, know.

But I did feel as a CLO that there was something needed for foreign born spouses, that they perhaps weren't getting. The other thing I found, and this may just have been the circumstances of the post, which had the highest cost of living in the western hemisphere, was that people are over housed at tremendous cost to do representational entertaining, and they weren't doing it. Because they were single, they traveled in groups just as we used to in college, and some of them had a representational apartment or house and never gave a party. I think that perhaps is happening around the world, and I wonder if we are not spending an awful lot of money over housing people. Did that come up in your CLO experience? It might have been that high cost of living.

BUCKLEY: Right. I didn't see it hardly at all in Senegal. It may have been in Bombay only from the standpoint, well, everyone had an apartment in Bombay, there are no houses available. The huge apartments were the least expensive because we got the lease on them many, many years ago in the '50s, and that's when a sort of rent control according to

Library of Congress

the union law was in effect. So we pay probably one-tenth for those large apartments than we do for the smaller ones that we have to rent now, because the Indians are very shrewd businessmen, and have taken advantage of the world market scene. So I think it varies.

Q: Probably at the individual post. I do think that the very high cost of living had an effect on people's morale. Even though there was a cost of living to offset it. Celery flown down from Miami could be \$6.00 a bunch. You know, it just pained me, but I bought it nonetheless.

BUCKLEY: I found substitutes, very healthy substitutes. In Senegal, for example, we were able to get lettuce for our salad, because they focus the French influence, made sure that part of their land available for agriculture was growing it. But in India, no. But, of course, they had cabbage of all types, so we substituted, and we made nice little salads with cabbage and it's very healthy.

Q: But see, even though Trinidad is a Caribbean island, not much is grown there because of the oil economy, and the black population moved off the land and the east Indians were really the people who were working on the soil. But not much was grown there, really, when you consider the size of the island and the size of the population. So things were brought in from Grenada, Dominica and the other eastern Caribbean British islands ... we're getting away from your male dependent spouse report. It might be interesting to talk again sometime after the results have come back.

BUCKLEY: Right. Well, the main thing that can be said is that it has been tested by 20 some male spouses, it's been reviewed by a number of people who have been CLOs and were also part of the survey of Foreign Service spouses made in '83 and '84, and it has been reviewed by a couple of people, who do questionnaires full time, so I think it is ready to be submitted world wide, and it will be at the end of this month. In fact, when I finish here I go to audio-visual to review...the woman in there has put our questionnaire and our two letters on press type so it is all ready to be run off as soon as I proofread it. And then

Library of Congress

it's a matter of doing the labels, all of those logistical matters. And then it is just a question of alerting and informing the many hundreds overseas that they should expect something in the mail. And we are going to send a special letter to the CLO Coordinator and/or the Administrative Officer for every post. Sending them a copy of the questionnaire as well as the information sheet and asking them to please put a little blurb in the post newsletter and helping anyone who has questions.

Q: You are certainly a very fine example of the potential that is there for someone who keeps his eyes open and has an interest and thinks positively and can find something to do as a spouse.

BUCKLEY: Well, like I say, I think that that has a possibility to be institutionalized because all I did was use my prior skills and there are various similar skills that others have had. And going through a process of assessing the situation, it's a very systematic method, we all use it but in different ways. But I think if OBC or someone focuses on making it part of an ongoing process where most spouses have an opportunity to become involved in it, it will really multiply the beneficial effects overseas, for themselves personally and for the community.

Q: May I ask you just one more question. You mentioned that the former CLOs get together because - to oversimplify - they no longer have anyone to help now that they are back in Washington. Were you being facetious or is it the problem?

BUCKLEY: No, there is a double edge to it. One, they would like to continue to assist, and that is why a number of them are part-time consultants to OBC and work some[times] with M/FLO. Because that is their nature, I mean that is why they were CLOs basically, they had the skills and the capacity to do that. But secondly, is a number of them have come back to the States and have found themselves being one of those newcomers to this post, which they are not really fully acquainted with nor do they like it, because it is too much for them.

Library of Congress

Q: They are all scattered.

BUCKLEY: Right, and some of them...I mean, at one meeting we attended, I think it was in September, some of the new ones expressed that this was the first time in a year...they joined the first, group, it has been going on now almost two years..they were at the first meeting in which they were totally in shock. I mean, they had been in their particular neighborhood for weeks, there was only one other person that didn't work in their cluster, and she finally made friends with them. They talked a lot, but I mean, to think that there wasn't really anything that [they] could begin to attach themselves to. So the whole notion was to bring together former CLOs because they have a common identity, a common experience, and to share these experiences and also then to begin to develop ways that they can at least while they are here in Washington, build and grow from their prior experience.

Q: I would imagine that these people are living in Annandale, and Springfield, and Silver Spring ... an interesting thing that has surfaced in this Project is the demographics of the Foreign Service [in Washington] ...

BUCKLEY: Where they [lived] previously?

Q: Exactly, and how they moved out, out, out, out, out, and there is a great difference in the group that was able to buy houses in Georgetown in the '40s. They are still there now, and they are in their 70s, they live close to one another. Now that their failing eyesight [means] they can no longer drive, they can walk to one another. They telephone each day checking on one another. The demographics just radiate out.

BUCKLEY: Then in the '50s out to Chevy Chase and Bethesda.

Q: Exactly. And before the Georgetown group ... Sheridan Circle, some of those big mansions, the Cosmos Club used to be Sumner Welles home. The demographics are right there, and we should look at that too, because here is your wagon wheel and

Library of Congress

your [Foreign Service] people are way out here now [at the end of the spokes]. So that homogenous Foreign Service which people had when they came home to their Georgetown houses in the '40s is no longer there.

BUCKLEY: Of these 80 I am the telephone tree for this meeting, the coordinator of the telephone tree, and of the 80 some former CLOs that are back in Washington and currently on our list, there are only eleven in DC, and 18 in Maryland, and the majority in Virginia and they keep going further...in fact, Karen Mondell asked me the other day, "Clifton? Where's Clifton?"

Q: I can believe it. Where is Clifton?

BUCKLEY: It's in between like Fairfax and Manassas, and it's a little, little .. I know because I took my wife there, had to go through it, to get to a George Mason outdoor facility where they do outdoor training.

BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Spouse's name: Prudence Bushnell

Date entered Service: 9/15/81 Left Service: Estimate 2001

Posts: 7/82 - 7/84Dakar, Senegal 9/84 - 7/86Bombay, India

Status: Male Dependent Spouse of Admin Officer FSO-02

Date and place of birth: Little Falls, New York, August 16, 1934

Parents: Joseph Buckley (deceased) and Dorothy Buckley

Schools:

Library of Congress

Niagara University, N.Y. BS-SS, 1957

Loyola University, New Orleans, La., Law School, LID, 1965

Date and place of marriage: October 26, 1979, Dallas, Texas

Profession: Lawyer & training consultant

Volunteer and Paid Positions held: A. At post: Training Consultant to USAID - Dakar
Accountant Consultant - Dakar, Nouakchott CLO Coordinator - Dakar embassy
Management Consultant Training - New Delhi embassy Consular Assistant - Bombay
Consulate Principal of Bombay International School

B. In Washington: Training Consultant - Overseas Briefing Center, FSI Associate -
Coverdale Organization

End of interview